

## **Minutes**

### **Asheville City Council - Public Safety Committee July 21, 2009, 2009 – 3:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m. Fourth Floor Municipal Building Training Room**

**Present:**     Council Members: Vice Mayor Jan Davis, Chair, Mayor Terry Bellamy, Councilmember Brownie Newman  
                  Staff: Assistant City Manager Jeff Richardson, Chief William Hogan, Interim Chief Scott Burnette, Assistant Chief Gary Cornett, Division Chief David Mcfee, Captain Tim Splain, Lauren Bradley, Richard Grant, Jessica Dunlap, Phil Kleisler  
                  Guests: District Attorney Ron Moore, Charlie Hume, Dwight Butner

#### **Health of Downtown Update**

- Lauren Bradley referred to the staff report regarding the Nuisance Court, Graffiti Removal, and Spare Change for Real Change.

#### **• Nuisance Court**

- Lauren Bradley stated that Council directed staff in May to come up with a remedy to address low-level crimes. District Attorney Ron Moore is very willing to work with the city, and has good ideas on structuring the initiative.
- Ron Moore explained that the courts often do not have time for individual attention for class 3 misdemeanors (City Ordinance Violations). Funding for a judge will be approximately \$400 per day (on per diem basis), and he (R. Moore) is currently looking into the need for a clerk.
- Ron Moore also stated that the officers must be willing to come to court, he is not interested in a mental health court, and what is needed are funding and work projects. He then suggested starting the court one day per month, then figuring out logistics after this point. As opposed to 40 days time served, 3-4 day time served plus 25 hours of community service could be offered. The City also does not need to micromanage the courts.
- Jan Davis asked if there will be a lot of paperwork to keep up with, and Ron Moore replied, no, they would just need work projects. Jan Davis then stated that between Public Works and Parks and Recreation Departments, there should be a number of available projects.
- Ron Moore stated that he would prefer greater regulations on the sale of spray paint.

- Lauren Bradley suggested identifying service projects for a one year budget allocation for this court at the Aug 11 City Council meeting.
- Brownie Newman asked who the City point person would be, and Lauren Bradley replied that she is currently working on this in the City Managers Office, would like this person to already have experience working with volunteers, and would like to use existing community resources.
- Jeff Richardson commented that these community service projects should be simple, straight forward projects that don't require a lot of training.
- Brownie Newman asked if we have the capacity to hold these people in jail if they recommit the crime. Ron Moore replied that he has started H.N.I. pleas, and has hired a paralegal to decrease the time it takes to schedule a jail plea.
- Mayor Bellamy asked how much is allocated to this. Lauren Bradley replied \$100,000 for downtown cleanliness improvements, \$35,000 for court costs, and that a detailed budget would be presented to Council at the August 11 meeting. Ron Moore then commented that \$10,000 is what we need.
- Major Bellamy introduced a motion to recommend Council to consider the committee's recommendation to approve \$10,000 budgeted in Community Safety. Jan Davis stated it is better than we (Council) hoped with donating three positions (Judge Hill).
- Mayor Bellamy asked that a letter be written to Judge Cash asking for Judge Hill to serve.
- Jan Davis stated that the letter to Judge Cash be written, and then the check should be sent immediately upon approval by council.
- Ron Moore stated that he will need 30-40 days of lead time on this, to meet with the Downtown Task Force (Captain Splain to schedule this) to decide who should go to court.
- Mayor Bellamy asked Captain Splain to give monthly updates, Ron Moore (D.A.) agreed to this for PSC and Quarterly updates to Council.

- **Graffiti Removal**

- Lauren Bradley discussed the scenarios that will go to August 11 City Council meeting: 1) City provides equipment and materials to a third party agency for removal services, 2) Third party agencies provide labor, City staff oversees graffiti removal, 3) City issues an RFQ for third-party removal services.
- Jan Davis commented that he doesn't want to fund or subsidize a third party, agrees with the program being voluntary, but should make an ordinance if it's not effective. A letter should be sent.
- Mayor Bellamy stated that buy-in from the community and property owners are important, and Lauren Bradley then suggested it should be at a reduced cost.
- Dwight Butner commented that nonprofit organizations should be encouraged to take on this burden. Who will you fine (lessee or leaser)?

- Mayor Bellamy stated that a seven day limit is more reasonable, but this should go to Council one more time.
  - Brownie Newman commented that by law there should be a time limit but with incentives, and we should put funding into this. The Mayor agrees.
  - Richard Grant stated that his department has a washer, and it should cost \$50 per call out, and \$9 per hour, per man.
  - Brownie Newman suggested the program run voluntary, and then if it doesn't work to try enforcement.
- **Spare Change for Real Change**
    - Asking for \$2,000 to 1) increase receptacles, two new and refurbish existing ones, and 2) remarket the program.
    - The new receptacle will be at the Grove Arcade and Court House.
    - Wants to advertise boxes with posters.
    - \$5,000 is expected this year, and would like to solicit businesses to match what is collected.
    - Mayor Bellamy comments that they are only tweaking plan, not going back to council, and makes motion to allow them to spend money to the most effective way possible.

#### **Asheville Police Department Monthly Report**

- Captain Tim Splain discussed a recent press conference on the arrest of 31 Crips gang members from Lee Walker Heights and Klondyke Apartments on 140 felony charges.
- There is a decrease in calls for service in Lee Walker do to weapons being seized. Now looking at Bloods, and a possible 28% decrease in overall gun crime in the City.
- Burglaries are up 19% in North and East parts of city.
- Two others are in jail for breaking and entering, were drug related charges.
- There is a decrease in traffic crashes, in areas of most crashes.
- 130 students graduated from the GREAT program at Asheville Middle School.

#### **Asheville Fire and Rescue Monthly Report:**

- Interim Chief Scott Burnette discussed items within the Fire and Rescue Periodic Report handout.
- On track for re-accreditation in 2010 (5 years)
- There has been a decrease in total emergency calls during the month of June.
- Pilot program at 300 Merrimon has shown significant improvements, with the standard of cover increasing to 100%.
- One Stop Shop is moving along.
- Haw Creek is in operation as of July 1, with the tanker apparatus being very beneficial.
- The Fire Station Construction grant has been submitted.

- Chief Burnette then discussed outreach efforts, including a training exercise, the retirement of six members, promotions, and new employees.

**Discussion**

- Change of time, with an agreement to end meetings Public Safety Committee meetings at 5:00pm.
- Switch Asheville Police Department and Fire and Rescue to alternate bimonthly.
- Jeff Richardson stated that the Quarterly Report to Council on August 25, should pay good attention to Police department and Fire and Rescue data.
- **Public Comment**
  - No public comment.
- **Meeting Adjournment**
  - The meeting adjourned at 5:02 pm.
- **Next Meeting**
  - Tuesday, August 18, 2009 – 3:30 pm to 5:00 pm in the Municipal Building 4<sup>th</sup> floor training room.